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Subject: St. Louis Public Radio - Agreement reached on Bridgeton landfill, but questions still remain

Agreement reached on Bridgeton landfill, but questions still remain

By [Véronique LaCapra](#)

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<http://kbia.org/post/agreement-reached-bridgeton-landfill-questions-still-remain>

Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster announced a preliminary agreement on Tuesday with the owner of the Bridgeton Landfill.

Koster filed a lawsuit against Republic Services six weeks ago, alleging violations of state environmental laws. A fire has been smoldering underground at the landfill for two and half years.

Under the agreement, Republic Services will pay to relocate nearby residents while it removes unstable concrete pipes from the landfill, a process that will take at least two weeks.

The construction will increase odors, but according to a letter from the state health department, not short term health risks.

The work is necessary before Republic can move forward with plans to cover part of the landfill with a hard plastic cap — an effort to contain foul-smelling, potentially toxic fumes.

Koster says the agreement also includes possible steps to keep the fire from spreading.

"Such steps may include the drilling of additional interceptor wells, the installation of additional temperature probes, complete capping of the north quarry, and ultimately, if necessary, the construction of a physical barrier between the fire and the radioactive material at the Westlake Landfill," Koster said.

But when asked whether the state would meet with the public to discuss health concerns, Attorney General Chris Koster said that's not up to him.

"Public questions related to the dissemination of public information and transparency related to this situation should be asked and answered by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Health," Koster said.

Residents say they've been frustrated by the lack of communication from those departments. And so far, neither the Department of Natural Resources nor the Department of Health & Senior Services have answered whether they plan to meet with the area residents to discuss their concerns.

Koster says the preliminary agreement with Republic Services does not settle the lawsuit, which he says is intended to address long term environmental impacts.

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